
SECTION THREE: QUALITY ASSURANCE

Part 1: Policies, operational procedures, and protocols

Agencies planning to use the social networks testing strategy should develop and implement quality assurance, training, and technical assistance procedures. Agencies should develop and maintain written policies, operational procedures and protocols for all activities performed in their social networks programs including the following:

- Ensuring accessibility of services
- Ensuring appropriateness and acceptability of services to client needs
- Ensuring appropriateness of services and materials to clients' culture, language, sex, sexual orientation, and age
- Ensuring staff adherence to program guidelines and performance standards
- Providing all program services including
 - Orienting, interviewing, and coaching recruiters
 - Supporting and following-up on recruiters
 - Locating and contacting network associates and recruiting them for HIV CTR
 - Conducting HIV prevention (risk reduction) counseling
 - Conducting HIV testing, including obtaining informed consent for testing
 - Assessing client needs and successfully referring clients for appropriate services
- Ensuring staff adherence to written protocols for provision of service to individual clients
- Ensuring staff performance and proficiency
- Supervising staff
- Ensuring safety in the field
- Using appropriate recordkeeping procedures
- Protecting client privacy and confidentiality
- Providing data management, including data collection and entry, transmission, analysis, and security
- Conducting HIV counseling, testing, and referral, including collection, handling, and storage of specimens and ensuring laboratory safety
- Assessing staff training needs and providing training
- Assessing program technical assistance needs and acquiring technical assistance
- Monitoring and evaluating the program
- Collaborating with health departments and other relevant agencies and organizations

Policies and procedures should be kept up-to-date and easily accessible to program staff. Program staff should be trained and periodically re-trained on all policies and procedures relevant to their work.

Part 2: Regulatory compliance

Agencies should ensure and document that their activities are in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. For example, if you are planning to use rapid HIV testing, then you should 1) obtain a Certificate of Waiver under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment (CLIA), or 2) establish a relationship with a laboratory to operate

under the laboratory's CLIA certificate. Also necessary is evidence of compliance with CLIA requirements and relevant state and local regulations applicable to waived HIV testing in the settings proposed for the program.

Agencies should ensure that all staff are appropriately credentialed for the functions they will be performing (e.g., state credentialing for HIV CTR, if required). Protocols should describe how agencies will ensure and document that their activities are in compliance with applicable laws and regulations and that all staff are appropriately credentialed.

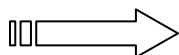
Agencies should be aware of, and comply with, any state or local requirements related to the Health Information Portability Privacy Act. Protocols should clearly describe such requirements and how they will be addressed.

Part 3: Training

With regard to staff training, agencies should:

- Develop and implement plans to ensure all staff are fully oriented to the program's purpose and goals
- Train staff in all policies, procedures, and protocols relevant to them

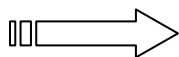
Lessons Learned



"Provide a guidance tool for coaching individuals and motivational tools that people can go to when they need personal motivation for themselves or for staff. Staff training should not just focus on how to do the program, but on how to do it with belief and motivation."

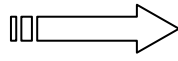
- Conduct initial assessment of individual and collective staff training needs (e.g., interviewing, outreach, CTR, rapid testing) and develop and implement plans for providing or obtaining appropriate training
- Conduct periodic reassessment of training needs
- Develop cross-training where possible such that recruiter and network associate needs can be met by a variety of staff members

Lessons Learned



"Having dedicated staff members is an excellent idea but the danger is that many CBOs have a high turnover rate, so when a "dedicated" person leaves, the network falls off. Cross-train when possible, and find backup or support in the event of turnover, which can be crippling to a social network."

Lessons Learned



“Even with cross-training, titles can be complicated and create barriers. For instance, a recruiter came in but the worker wasn’t there, resulting in a missed opportunity because it was considered someone else’s role.”

- Review training plans with health department to ensure that training is in accordance with state and local requirements
- Determine how training needs will be assessed
- Determine how training plans will be developed
- Determine how training will be provided or obtained (e.g., local/state health department).

Part 4: Technical assistance

Any agency planning to use the social networks strategy should:

- Conduct initial assessment of technical assistance needed to support program activities and develop and implement plans for obtaining appropriate assistance
- Conduct periodic reassessment of technical assistance needs and develop and implement appropriate technical assistance plans
- Review technical assistance plans with health department to ensure adherence to state and local requirements

Protocols should describe how technical assistance needs will be assessed, technical assistance plans developed, and technical assistance obtained (e.g., local/state health department).